

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 NEAE-00 /101 W
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O 121433Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4148
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR PBOR EG IS XF
SUBJECT: FOCUS STILL ON SETTLEMENTS AS MILITARY COMMITTEE
- MEETS

REF: CAIRO 01065

SUMMARY. FOLLOWING SADAT-WEIZMAN MEETING MILITARY COM-
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MITTEE HELD FIRST SESSION JANUARY 11 IN ATMOSPHERE
DAMPENED BY SETTLEMENTS ISSUE. SADAT SAYS HE WILL SEEK
MAINTAIN FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE AND WEIZMAN UPBEAT, BUT
NEWS REPORTS DESCRIBE LATEST BEGIN STATEMENTS AS
"EXTREMIST" AND EDITORIALISTS FIND BEGIN ATTITUDE
UNACCEPTABLE. FIRST COMMITTEE SESSION CALLED "CONSTRUC-
TIVE". PRIVATELY, EGYPTIANS DEPRESSED ABOUT

ISRAELI APPROACH BUT ARE SEEKING MAINTAIN CONSTRUCTIVE CLIMATE FOR TALKS AND LOOKING TO U.S. TO MOVE ISRAELIS OFF LONG-STANDING POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. SADAT-WEIZMAN. FIRST SESSION OF CAIRO MILITARY COMMITTEE PRECEDED BY HOUR-AND-HALF MEETING BETWEEN SADAT AND WEIZMAN IN ASWAN. WEIZMAN SAID HE HAD BEEN HAPPY WITH INVITATION TO ASWAN "BECAUSE HE CONSIDERS PRESIDENT SADAT A FRIEND FROM NOW ON." ACCORDING AHAM, SADAT TOLD WEIZMAN EGYPT WOULD "NOT ENGAGE IN WAR OF TV STATEMENTS IN ORDER GIVE MILITARY AND POLITICAL COMMITTEES OPPORTUNITY TO WORK IN CALM ATMOSPHERE." NEVERTHELESS, SADAT SAID TO HAVE ADHERED STRONGLY TO HIS STATED POSITION. WEIZMAN REPORTEDLY TOLD SADAT HE WILL FLY TO ISRAEL JANUARY 13 TO BRIEF BEGIN AND PARTICIPATE IN OPENING OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE. WILL LEAVE DEPUTY MINDEF GEN. ZIPORI IN CHARGE.

2. SETTLEMENTS. GAMASY TOLD OPENING SESSION THERE COULD BE NO PEACE WITHOUT TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND ELIMINATION OF ALL SETTLEMENTS FROM SINAI. PRESS DESCRIBED BEGIN'S VIEWS GIVEN TO FRENCH RADIO AS "EXTREMIST". AHAM EDITORIALIZED THAT BEGIN'S ATTITUDE ON SETTLEMENTS "TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE" WHETHER AIMED AT PACIFYING INTERNAL OPPOSITION OR AT STAKING OUT BROADEST POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING GROUND. REFLECTING EGYPTIAN FRUSTRATIONS ON QUESTION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AKHBAR ISSUED ONE OF ITS PERIODIC EDITORIAL REMINDERS OF EGYPT'S MILITARY CAPABILITIES.

3. EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS. PRESS LEARNED THAT EGYPTIAN "PROPOSALS" ON SINAI INCLUDE FOLLOWING: TOTAL WITHDRAWAL WITHIN 18 MONTHS; EARLY WARNING STATIONS FOR BOTH SIDES, BUT NOT MANNED BY EVEN SINGLE ISRAELI SOLDIER; NO JOINT ADMINISTRATION OF SHARM AL-SHEIKH ON ANY BASIS; FREE NAVIGATION IN GULF OF AQABA, TO BE GUARANTEED BY UN FORCES; WIDENING OF SINAI BUFFER ZONE "IN PROPORTION WITH NARROW DEPTH OF ISRAEL"; ELIMINATION OF ALL SETTLEMENTS AND THE THREE ISRAELI AIR FIELDS AFTER SIGNING OF PEACE; AND DMZ'S ON BOTH SIDES OF INTERNATIONAL BORDER.

4. ISRAELI PROPOSALS. ISRAELI PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN PRESS RELEASE WERE: (A) WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI BY IDF IN STAGES ; (B) LIMITED FORCES AND ARMAMENTS ZONES, DMZ'S (NOT SPECIFIED WHERE) AND UN FORCES; (C) MAINTENANCE OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AND DETERMINATION OF THEIR STATUS, (D) STATUS OF ISRAELI AIR FIELDS; AND (E) SUPERVISION OF SECURITY MEASURES.

4. FIRST DAY GOES WELL. ARRIVAL OF ISRAELI DELEGATION,
ALL IN MUFTI, JANUARY 11 WELL COVERED BY MEDIA AND
SEEMED TO GO WELL. TV TAPES OF GAMASY-WEIZMAN ENCOUNTERS
SHOWED RELAXED GAMASY AND VOLUBLE WEIZMAN SMILING AND
APPARENTLY COMFORTABLE TOGETHER. BOTH EXPRESSED OPTIMISM
TO PRESS. GAMASY ASSERTED ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS MOST
IMPORTANT ISSUE. WEIZMAN SAID SETTLEMENTS PROBLEM "HAD
REGRETTABLY EVOLVED OVER THIRTY YEARS" AND WOULD CER-

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TAINLY BE DEALT WITH. GAMASY REPLIED "WE CAN NOT BE
EITHER OPTIMISTIC OR PESSIMISTIC" ON SETTLEMENTS
QUESTION, BUT BELIEVED NEGOTIATIONS WOULD EVENTUALLY
LEAD TO CONCLUSION OF PEACE AGREEMENT.

5. PRESS DESCRIBED AS "POSITIVE" WEIZMAN COMMENT THAT ISRAELI CONCEPT OF SECURITY HAS CHANGED IN WAKE OF OCTOBER WAR." REMINDED PRESS, HOWEVER, THAT "UNFORTUNATE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LY" ISRAEL HAD THUS FAR SPOKEN ONLY WITH "OUR FRIENDS THE EGYPTIANS" AND HAD NOT YET MET WITH SYRIANS, IRAQIS (SIC), JORDANIANS OR SAUDIS "AND WE KNOW THAT THE MIDDLE EAST IS A VAST WORLD IN WHICH ISRAEL IS JUST A SMALL SPOT."

6. OPENING SESSION "CONSTRUCTIVE". FOLLOWING FIRST SESSION EGYPTIAN SPOKESMAN MG ELKATEB AND ISRAELI SPOKESMAN KOLITZ ANNOUNCED SETTLEMENTS HAD TOPPED LIST OF QUESTIONS DISCUSSED BY COMMITTEE. WHILE ISRAELIS HAD DISTRIBUTED WRITTEN STATEMENT EGYPTIANS LIMITED THEMSELVES TO ORAL REMARKS FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION OF SETTLEMENTS AND SECURITY QUESTIONS. FIRST SESSION, WHICH LASTED - HOUR AND HALF, WAS "CONSTRUCTIVE". COMMITTEE WOULD RESUME MEETINGS JANUARY 13 AT 1000 WITH ISRAELI COS GUR PRESENTATION OF ISRAELI SECURITY PROBLEMS TO BE FOLLOWED BY GENERAL DISCUSSIONS. SPOKESMEN SAID QUESTION OF OCCUPIED TERRITORIES IN WEST BANK AND GAZA WOULD BE DISCUSSED FIRST BY POLITICAL COMMITTEE IN JERUSALEM AND THEN BY MILITARY COMMITTEE.

7. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH EGYPTIANS DEEPLY DISSATISFIED WITH ISRAELI OPENING POSITIONS, MEDIA, CUING ON SADAT, CAN BE EXPECTED AVOID STRONG ATTACKS FOR TIME BEING. EGYPTIAN PUBLIC APPROACHING THESE NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT EUPHORIC HOOPLA WHICH PRECEDED OPENING OF CAIRO CONFERENCE AND ISMAILIA SUMMIT, AND MAY THEREFORE SPARE THEMSELVES ANOTHER SHARP LETDOWN IF EARLY RESULTS LESS THAN IDEAL. NEVERTHELESS, ONE SENIOR AMBASSADOR TOLD POLCOUNS JANUARY 12 HIGHEST LEVEL MFA OFFICIALS ARE DEPRESSED AND AT LOSS TO FIND BASIS FOR SADAT'S CONTINUING OPTIMISM IN VIEW ABSENCE ANY SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT IN ISRAELI POSITIONS. HE CONCLUDED SADAT MUST BE RELYING ON U.S. SINCE HE BELIEVES SADAT'S PEACE PROPOSALS ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOTALLY COMPATIBLE WITH U.S. POLICY. JUDGING BY PRESS ACCOUNTS OF YESTERDAY'S CARTER-SADAT MESSAGE (SEPTTEL), MEDIA IS BEING ENCOURAGED TO PUSH LINE THAT U.S. DOES INDEED INTEND TO PLAY HIGHLY ACTIVE ROLE IN POLITICAL COMMITTEE. EILTS

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